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until some incautious intruder has found his way in ; and, when his strength has been exhausted in vain struggles to escape, seizes and devours him. Is not the plan thus laid for capturing insect prey an inevitable result of the organization of the animal as well as of the plant ; and is it not carried out by a sort of physiological fatality, as imperative in the one case as in the other ?

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4.—*Lorenzo de' Medici il Magnifico.* Von. ALFRED VON REUMONT. Leipzig. 1874. 2 vols. 8vo. pp. xxiii., 606 ; xviii., 604.

At the close of the last century a Liverpool attorney published a life of the great Florentine banker, statesman, and poet, known in history as Lorenzo de' Medici, which has since enjoyed a popularity seldom reached even by works of far greater merit. The novelty of the subject, but even more the novelty of the treatment, contributed to make Mr. Roscoe's success as splendid as durable, both at home and abroad, for he may fairly be said to have introduced to the Italians one of their greatest men. In spite of many grave defects, this work will doubtless long remain one of the most entertaining historical monographs in the language. Its distinguishing feature is a judicious blending of the political, social, and literary elements of the period, producing a picture of great brilliance and interest, but which is to good history what Dubufe's *Prodigal Son*, for instance, is to good art. The utterly false conception which Mr. Roscoe conveys of his hero has already been fully exposed by Sismondi, and later by Villari\* whose views have been reproduced by Trollope in his history of Florence, and the new methods of political and literary history have long ago outstripped a work, the best part of which is but second-hand and incomplete. The interest of the period itself remained, and continued the popularity of a book for which no better substitute could be found.

This interest has, if possible, increased of late years, as the importance of the Italian Renaissance for literature and art has been more clearly recognized, so that a new work on Lorenzo de' Medici could not have appeared at a more opportune time. Von Reumont's book fills the want long felt of an exhaustive treatise upon the political, social, and literary phases of Italian (and, in a more restricted sense,

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\* In his *Storia di Girolamo Savonarola e de suoi tempi* (2 vols. Florence: Le Monnier), of which there is an excellent translation by Horner in the *History of Girolamo Savonarola and of his Times*. 2 vols. London: Longman & Green, 1863.

Florentine) life during the latter half of the fifteenth century. The new material at the disposal of the historian of the present day is very large, especially in Italy, where, within a few years, access has been granted to archives never before open to the public, while the rearrangement of municipal and provincial archives has brought to light many valuable and interesting documents.

The book before us is the last of a long series of contributions to Italian art, literature, and history, by one whose training and opportunities have made him one of the best living authorities on these subjects. Alfred von Reumont, born at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1808, after taking his degree in law, entered the diplomatic service of Prussia, and was sent in 1829 to Florence, where, after service at Constantinople, Rome, and London, he became *chargé d'affaires* to Tuscany, and has since then resided in Florence, devoting himself to Italian history and art. It is probable that his previous work has been of a preparatory nature, and that his *Lorenzo de' Medici* is the accomplishment of the wish of his life, the fruition of the author's ripest studies.

The disposition of his material is as follows: The first book contains an account of Florence and the Medici to the death of Cosimo, Pater Patriæ. This period (from the end of the twelfth century to 1464) includes the rise of the Medicean family, the development of Florentine democracy, the rise and progress of art and commerce, the rivalry of the Albizzi and Medici, the defeat and triumph of Cosimo, and the political affairs of Florence to the death of the "Father of his country." The second book embraces the life of Piero de' Medici and the youth of his son Lorenzo, in which period fall the conspiracy of Diotisalvi Neroni and his friends, Lorenzo's education, marriage, and travels, and the brilliant social life of Florence. The third book contains an account of the conspiracy of the Pazzi and the war with Rome and Naples, Lorenzo's famous journey to the latter State, and the peace which was the result of his bold move. The fourth book is in many respects the most interesting portion of the whole work, containing an exhaustive account of the Medici in their relations to literature and art. This section occupies more than three hundred pages, and is, we presume, the most complete treatise extant on this subject.

The fifth book describes the development of the Medicean supremacy, the consequent changes in the Florentine constitution, and the efforts of Lorenzo to maintain the balance of power. The sixth and last book contains the closing years of Lorenzo's life, the condition of public affairs, finances, etc., in 1490, life in Florence, and especially Lorenzo's own mode of living, the opposition and Savonarola, and the

death of Lorenzo. In a supplement the author gives a convenient chronological view of the entire work, genealogical tables of the Medici, Pazzi, Soderini, Visconti, and Sforza families, an account of Lorenzo's death-bed, and a bibliography of works relating to this period. We regret to say that this work suffers from that chronic German complaint, want of index, the lack of which is very insufficiently supplied by the table of contents.

The author has preserved the due proportions of his materials; the literary and social do not outweigh as with Roscoe the pure historical side, while a glance at the table of contents will show they are not neglected. On the contrary, the author has presented a picture of the social and literary life of Florence in the latter half of the fifteenth century unrivalled for completeness and accuracy. He is singularly moderate in his judgments, and like his friend Gino Capponi\* prefers to let his readers draw their own inferences from the facts he has carefully gathered and placed before them. If he does not assume a denunciatory tone towards Lorenzo, he at least does not conceal or garble the facts in regard to him, which are, after all, sufficiently condemnatory in themselves.

It seems at first sight strange that a city (we should say State, but Florence was the State for so many years that it is hard to separate them), the one political fear of which was that one of its own citizens should become its tyrant, should fall under the yoke of such a family as the Medici, who first plundered it, and then destroyed forever its independence. The hold of the Medici upon the State was but temporarily relaxed from the time that Cosimo returned from exile in 1434. The State drove them out several times, but they always returned to fix themselves more firmly on its vitals, until the body corporate was too exhausted to do aught but suffer. The early history of the family is buried in an obscurity which Von Reumont cannot clear up. They did not belong to the historical families of Florence, and the first trace of them appears near the end of the twelfth century. A hundred years later, one of them, Ardingo, was one of the Priors, and in 1296 *gonfaloniere*, which office was filled three years later by his brother Guccio. The sarcophagus which once held the latter's remains bears the well-known coat-of-arms of the family and that of the guild of the *calimala* (woollen cloth), to which he belonged. The origin of the family as well as of its armorial bearings is absolutely unknown. By some the origin of the balls (*palle*, hence the name *palleschi* as applied to the adherents of the Medici) has been

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\* See "North American" for October, 1875.

carried as far back as Perseus and the apples of Hesperides, others refer them to the time of Charlemagne, and claim that they represent the hilly region of Mugello. Others still think they indicate descent from some knight who assumed as his arms the dents left in his shield during some combat with a giant. Those more moderate in their views attribute the balls to the supposed medical origin of the family, and it has been hinted that they were in some way connected with the pawnbrokers' sign. All these stories, it is needless to say, have no foundation.

The family belonged to the *popolani*, and not until the latter half of the fourteenth century did any member of it assume a prominent position in Florentine politics. Then Averardo (surnamed Bicci) and his cousin Salvestro made the name well known. The latter, who was several times *gonfaloniere*, is best known from his connection with the celebrated *Ciompi* riot in 1378. Averardo was the head of the afterwards famous Medici family, and laid the foundation of the wealth to which so much of its success was due. His grandson was Cosimo, Pater Patriæ, Lorenzo's grandfather. Von Reumont draws a darker picture of him than is usually given. He was of a retiring disposition, simple in his tastes and carefully concealing the part he took in the affairs of the State. He inherited a large fortune, and increased it greatly by his own efforts, beginning that unfortunate system of speculation which led to such disastrous results in Lorenzo's day. How great Cosimo's influence was, may be seen by the fact that he compelled Venice and Naples to make peace with Florence by withdrawing his credit from them. His conscience was not, however, clear as to the means by which part at least of his fortune had been acquired, and the large sums he spent upon the building of churches and other religious edifices give the measure of his uneasiness about the future. When he came to die, two things troubled him: first, that he had not done as much good as he had desired, and been able to do; and second, that he left his son Piero in feeble health.

This sickly son, surnamed the Gouty, occupies an unfortunate position between his celebrated father and his still more famous son. He was, however, a person of much ability, and managed to transmit unimpaired to his son the power he had inherited from his father. He died in 1469, fifty-three years old, and was, so to speak, succeeded by his son Lorenzo, afterwards termed *il Magnifico*, then twenty-one years old.

One of the most difficult points in the history of the Medici (before the *principato*) is to fix with certainty the nature and extent of the political power they enjoyed in the commonwealth. They were

regarded as princes (after the conspiracy of the Pazzi the State gave Lorenzo a body-guard), but held no public position, and yet were able to direct the commonwealth as their own business, appropriate its revenues, wage war, make alliances; in short, for all practical purposes they were as much "tyrants" as the rulers of Milan and Verona. Von Reumont gives a tolerably clear idea of the tenure of the Medici power in the first volume of his work, page 292, *et seq.*, and some light is also thrown on the subject from Lorenzo's private journal, in which, following the example of his ancestors, he has jotted down the most memorable events of his life. He says that the second day after his father's death the principal men of the city and State came to his house to condole with him on his father's death, and to ask him to assume the care of the city and State as his father and grandfather had done; he adds: "which thing, as being incompatible with my age, and of great weight and danger, I accepted unwillingly, and only for the preservation of our friends and property, because it is difficult to live in Florence without having authority in the State (*senza lo stato*)."

Francesco Guicciardini, in one of his works, which has but lately seen the light (*Del Reggimento di Firenze*), says: "The government of the Medici was a party government, usurped by the party, kept by tyranny neither violent nor cruel, a few cases excepted, where it was necessary to be so; a government founded on the acquiescence of the weak, the union of the interests of the more powerful with its own interest, and on the oppression of all those who assumed an air of independence." The matter of Lorenzo's succession, then, was arranged by the "party," which, the evening after Piero's burial, held a meeting to which all the principal citizens who were in favor of the existing government were invited. Some six hundred of the flower of the city met in the cloister of St. Antonio, near the Porta Faenza, and Tommaso Soderini made a speech and proposed that Lorenzo should be continued in his father's position. Some others remarked, "that it was necessary to have a lord and head, who alone would have to manage the concerns of the State of this noble signory." A sad change indeed in Florentine public opinion when such words could be openly spoken, much less listened to and followed. The manner in which the party kept the reins in its own hands was as follows. The ordinance of September 6, 1476, had placed the election of the highest magistrates for the next ten years in the hands of electors who were named by the Council of the Hundred. The heads of the party were accustomed on extraordinary occasions to select the names of these electors and hand them to the aforesaid council, which at once

accepted and appointed them, as the council in turn was composed, if not entirely of members of the party, at least of those who did not oppose it. It happened, however, sometimes, that not all the candidates proposed were appointed, and it is easy to see that the time might come when the election might be in the hands of electors unfavorable to the Medici cause. In order to avoid this danger various plans were introduced. In the summer of 1470 the government, then entirely devoted to the Medici, introduced a resolution in the Council of the Hundred, providing for the establishment of an electoral college, consisting of all the electors then remaining from 1434, forty in number, with five new ones to be named, from which number five were to be drawn yearly who were to appoint the *signori* and the *gonfaloniere* from the list of citizens capable of holding office. This outrageous attempt to set up forty-five tyrants over the city failed. Six months later, however, a similar plan succeeded, namely, the *signori* for July and August, together with the electors who officiated that year, named those for the next, the Council of the Hundred confirming them by a bare majority, where previously a two-thirds vote had been necessary. It is needless to say that at the next election in July only the names of reliable persons were put on the tickets, and the government came more and more into the hands of the few. This was all done by the party itself while Lorenzo was still young, and before his great personal influence was felt, and before the attempts on his life increased his popularity and strengthened his hold on the State. How strong this hold was, his later life shows, when he was the real head of the State, when popes, kings, and princes addressed him, and ambassadors corresponded with him.

The period of Lorenzo's greatness has been the subject of many volumes, but the reader who has heretofore depended on Roscoe will find in the work before us abundance of new material which will probably modify most seriously the views advanced by him, while at the same time it will mitigate the extreme opinions of Villari and Trollope.

Lorenzo's last years were rendered unhappy by bodily infirmities and the anxieties of his position, which was necessarily always a critical one. There must have been many things on his conscience which he could not relieve, like Cosimo, by lavish gifts to the church. His life was full enough of dramatic incidents, but its final scene was in some respects the most dramatic of all. After trying various mineral baths in vain, he was carried in March of 1492 to his favorite villa of Careggi. Here he grew rapidly worse, and set his house

in order for his approaching death. A priest of San Lorenzo administered the *viaticum*, and then, strangest of the many strange events in the history of the Magnificent, Savonarola entered his chamber, having been summoned at Lorenzo's express desire. Of what followed there are two very different versions, one by Burlamacchi, the friend and biographer of the friar, the other by Poliziano. The latter account is the one received by Von Reumont, and runs as follows: "Scarcely had Pico left Careggi when Fra Girolamo of Ferrara, a man distinguished for his learning and holy life, and an eminent preacher of the gospel, entered the room and exhorted the sick man to hold fast to the faith. Lorenzo answered that his faith was unshaken. The friar then urged him to lead in the future a better life, and he said he would with all his might. Finally, Savonarola exhorted him, if necessary, to meet death calmly. The dying man said that nothing would be sweeter if it were the will of God. The friar was on the point of departing, when Lorenzo said: 'Give me a blessing, father, before you leave me.' And with bowed head and countenance, and with all the appearance of religious earnestness, he responded correctly and consciously to the friar's words and prayers, undisturbed by the now open sorrow of his family."

Burlamacchi's account, as given by Villari (Horner's translation, Vol. I., p. 141) is as follows: "Pico had no sooner retired than Savonarola entered, and approached respectfully the bed of the dying Lorenzo, who said that there were three sins he wished to confess to him, and for which he asked absolution: the sacking of Volterra; the money taken from the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, which had caused so many deaths; and the blood shed after the conspiracy of the Pazzi. While saying this, he again became agitated, and Savonarola tried to calm him, by frequently repeating, 'God is good, God is merciful.' Lorenzo had scarcely left off speaking, when Savonarola added, 'Three things are required of you.' 'And what are they, father?' replied Lorenzo. Savonarola's countenance became grave, and, raising the fingers of his right hand, he thus began: "First, it is necessary that you should have a full and lively faith in the mercy of God.' 'That I have most fully.' 'Secondly, it is necessary to restore that which you unjustly take away, or enjoin your sons to restore it for you.' This requirement appeared to cause him surprise and grief; however, with an effort, he gave his consent, by a nod of his head. Savonarola then rose up, and while the dying prince shrank with terror in his bed, the confessor seemed to rise above himself when saying, 'Lastly, you must restore liberty to the people of Florence.' His countenance was solemn, and his voice



almost terrible; his eyes, as if to read the answer, remained fixed intensely on those of Lorenzo; who, collecting all the strength that nature had left him, turned his back on him scornfully, without uttering a word. And thus Savonarola left him without giving him absolution, and the Magnificent, lacerated by remorse, soon after breathed his last, on the 8th of April, 1492."

Von Reumont, in an appendix, shows that there is good reason to doubt the latter account, and his opinion has been followed by Gino Capponi in his *History of Florence*.

The most interesting portion of Von Reumont's work for the general reader is, as we have said, the fourth book, — the Medici in relation to Literature and Art, — which treats with the greatest fulness the literary side of the Renaissance. The mass of details accumulated here, as elsewhere, by the author, is enormous; and even if it sometimes obstructs the progress of the narration, it will prove most welcome to students for whom these very details are so important, and which are often so difficult to obtain. A notable feature in this division is that the author does not lose sight of the popular literature of Italy, and the change wrought in it by the Renaissance. This is especially valuable since this period has been thoroughly treated by Burckhardt, Voigt, and others, with almost exclusive reference to classical studies. Von Reumont gives a crowd of details concerning the book-trade of the fourteenth century, prices of manuscripts, manufacture of paper, and the fourth section gives an account of the libraries founded by Cosimo de Medici (San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, St. Mark's in Florence, and that of the Abbey of Fiesole), Niccolai's manuscripts, fifteenth-century copyists, etc. The fifth section contains a valuable sketch of Italian literature and popular religious poetry. In intimate connection with this section stands the next on Lorenzo de' Medici as poet, for the most salient quality of Lorenzo's poetry is its popularity, and the three popular directions of the literature of his day are all represented in his works, namely, the *laude*, or spiritual songs; *sacre rappresentazioni*, or religious plays; and *canti carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs. Very interesting, too, is the account of the Platonic school, which occupies so large a space in the history of this period, and the very complete sketch of Poliziano, Lorenzo's lifelong friend.

Our space forbids anything but a mention of the section devoted to the fine arts. Von Reumont shows that although the period was not the most brilliant, still it hardly deserves Villari's severe denunciations. In short, everything proves that the age of Lorenzo was not only one of transition, but one the elements of which were held

together by the strong will of Lorenzo himself; and at his death the most sudden dissolution overwhelmed them, and in a few years it was hard to realize that this brilliant age had ever existed. The sudden disruption of the balance of power, to establish which he had labored all his life, the exile of his family, the invasion of Italy and the beginning of the countless woes of succeeding ages, the religious reaction and the tyranny of Savonarola and his party, — all these were events as sudden as unforeseen, except by a few, among them Lorenzo himself, and for some of which he was directly responsible.

Von Reumont's estimate of Lorenzo is, it seems to us, marked by great fairness. According to him Lorenzo possessed the quickest susceptibility and the most rapid comprehension, together with the earnestness and care of a student, a fresh and happy taste for the fine arts, with the capability of direct application to the ordinary affairs of life. He thus united the qualities of the poet and statesman, the connoisseur and unwearied patron, the citizen and prince, fancy and clear judgment, great plans and patient calculation. He was tireless in the manifold duties which devolved on him in the guidance of a peculiarly constituted State; enduring, embracing the whole of his duties with a sure and rapid glance, and observing the smallest detail; in his riper years prudent and thoughtful, keeping his eye fixed on his aim, without blind self-confidence and boasting, although with a lively feeling of his own position as well as that of the State of which he was the representative. He passed with great ease from practical politics to speculation, science, and poetry, even here comprehensive, many-sided, creative as very few were, with the deepest interest in and most delicate sense of beauty, and with profound insight into the being and problems of art.

In his domestic relations he was friendly, social, cheerful even in the midst of bodily pain, not free from errors that already at that time, and more at a later date, relaxed the marriage relations, yet with a real attachment for his family, for the excellent mother many of whose good qualities he shared, for the wife whom he had not chosen,\* for his children, to whom he was a kind but not a weak father and a judicious adviser. A warm, true, attentive friend, attracting and retaining the most different dispositions, always ready to help in word and deed, in the midst of a thousand business cares interfering and interesting himself for high and low. He was not free from the weaknesses and vices of his time; they injured his

\* He says in his journal, or *Ricordi*, mentioned above: "I, Lorenzo, took Donna Clarice, daughter of Signore Iacopo Orsino, or rather she was given to me." (*Ovvero mi fu data.*)

policy, although it stands high above that of most princes and statesmen of his day, Italian as well as foreign, in honesty and consistency. During the last ten years of his life, he clung immovably to the necessity of preserving peace and concord with that national consciousness which corresponded to the idea entertained at that day, and which it would be unjust to blame because it differed from our own. His internal policy has been most severely blamed for the changes made in the constitution for the purpose of increasing his personal authority, and the corruption of which he was guilty in order to obtain unbounded control over the finances of the State.

In conclusion, Von Reumont says that the greatest evil perhaps in Lorenzo's government was in the increasing incongruity between the outer form and the real power, in the removal of authority from its legal centre, whereby both justice and moderation were put in peril. The personal element gave the decision in the policy of the State as well as in its finances and justice. If Lorenzo's government on the whole was free from the excesses which marked that of Cosimo, it was due to the change in the times as well as to the disposition of Lorenzo. "He wished to rule, but he was no tyrant. In the first place, he was too sagacious and knew too well the character and traditions of the people; on the other hand, his was a nature too rich and magnanimous, too much in need of friendship, too fond of enjoyment. In short, he was too much a Florentine citizen."

Such, in brief, is the author's estimate of the most remarkable man of a remarkable period, a period the influence of which is still felt in literature and art; and which will never cease to attract and puzzle the student of political and social history.

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5.—*The Methods of Ethics.* By HENRY SIDGWICK, M. A., Lecturer and late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. London. Macmillan & Co. 1874. 8vo. pp. xxiii. and 473.

MR. SIDGWICK has given, in his table of contents, so complete an account of his aim and mode of procedure, that nothing more is needed here than a brief outline. What he undertakes is a critical review of the various methods by which the common-sense of mankind (or perhaps we ought rather to say, of England and America) justifies to itself the fundamental assumption of Ethics; and to exhibit impartially the conclusions to which they logically lead, without any final judgment of their conflicting claims.

The fundamental assumption is, that there is something under any